

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

DC-DC CONVERTER APPLIED TO SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO THE RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is based upon and claims the
5 benefit of priority from the prior Japanese Patent
Application No. 2003-117289, filed April 22, 2003, the
entire contents of which are incorporated herein by
reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to a DC-DC converter
which forms, for example, a boosting (stepup) or
bucking (stepdown) circuit that increases or decreases
a direct-current voltage.

15 2. Description of the Related Art

FIG. 28 shows an example of a conventional
boosting circuit, which is composed of an oscillator
(OSC) 1, a pump circuit (PMP) 2, a voltage detecting
circuit 3 consisting of resistors R1 and R2, and a
20 comparator (CMP) 4. The oscillator 1 produces a pulse
signal. The pump circuit 2, which is formed of a
capacitor and a charge-transfer diode or a capacitor
and a charge-transfer transistor, produces a boosted
voltage in response to the output signal of the
25 oscillator 1. The voltage detecting circuit 3 detects
the output voltage of the pump circuit 2. The
comparator 4, which is comprised of a differential

amplifier by way of example, makes a comparison between the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit 3 and a reference voltage V_{ref} and then outputs a signal corresponding to the difference therebetween. When the
5 output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit 3 is lower than the reference voltage V_{ref} , the comparator 4 enables the oscillator 1. When the output voltage of the voltage detector 3 is higher than the reference voltage V_{ref} , that is, when the boosted voltage has
10 reached the target voltage, the comparator 4 disables the oscillator 1.

As an invention relating to this type of boosting circuit, a circuit is known which is capable of producing a high voltage with low power dissipation
15 (see, for example, Unexamined Japanese Patent Publication No. 10-302492).

With the comparator comprised of a differential amplifier, its output response is slow when the bias current is low. Increasing the bias current in order
20 to make the response faster results in increased current dissipation. For this reason, it is not desirable to supply too high a bias current. Consequently, the conventional comparator is used in a state where its output response is slow. Thus, it is
25 impossible for the comparator which is slow in response to stop the operation of the boosting circuit as soon as its output voltage has reached the target voltage.

The pump circuit 2 would therefore be shut down after several pumping operations. For this reason, the boosted voltage would increase above the target voltage, causing a ripple. In general, a decoupling capacitor is connected between the output of the pump circuit 2 and ground potential in order to reduce the ripple. To reduce the ripple, however, a capacitor of large capacitance would be needed. Thus, the method for reducing the ripple using a capacitor involves a problem that the chip size increases.

If the pump circuit 2 should be disabled in the middle of an operation, charges may remain on the capacitor that forms the pump circuit or they may flow backward. These charges may cause noise. It is therefore required to disable the pump circuit precisely. The above problems were described in terms of a boosting circuit; however, the same applies to a bucking circuit.

Accordingly, there is a demand for a DC-DC converter that is capable of reducing the ripple in the output voltage and preventing the generation of noise.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to an aspect of the present invention, there is provided a DC-DC converter circuit comprising: an oscillator which produces a signal; a voltage generating circuit which is supplied with a first voltage and responsive to the output signal of the

oscillator to generate a second voltage different from
the first voltage; a voltage detecting circuit which is
connected to the output of the voltage generating
circuit to detect the second voltage output from the
5 voltage generating circuit and output an output voltage
corresponding to the second voltage; and a comparator
which is supplied with the output signal of the
oscillator, the output voltage of the voltage detecting
circuit, and a reference voltage, the comparator making
10 a comparison between the output voltage of the voltage
detecting circuit and the reference voltage with each
cycle of the output signal of the oscillator and
controlling the operation of the voltage generating
circuit in accordance with the result of the
15 comparison.

According to another aspect of the present
invention, there is provided a DC-DC converter circuit
comprising: an oscillator which produces a signal; a
timing generator which is supplied with the output
20 signal of the oscillator to generate a plurality of
timing signals; a pump circuit which is supplied with
the timing signals from the timing generator and a
first voltage to generate a second voltage higher than
the first voltage in response to the timing signals; a
25 voltage detecting circuit which is connected to the
output of the pump circuit to detect the second voltage
output from the pump circuit and output an output

voltage corresponding to the second voltage; and a comparator which is supplied with the output signal of the oscillator, the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit, and a reference voltage, the comparator making a comparison between the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit and the reference voltage with each cycle of the output signal of the oscillator and controlling the operation of the timing generator.

According to still another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a DC-DC converter circuit comprising: a first pulse generator responsive to an input signal to output a first pulse signal; first and second switch circuits which are supplied with the first pulse signal output from the first pulse generator; a second pulse generator which is connected to the output of the first switch circuit to output a plurality of second pulse signals in response to the output signal of the first pulse generator supplied from the first switch circuit; a pump circuit which is supplied with the plurality of second pulse signals output from the second pulse generator and a first voltage and boosts the first voltage to a second voltage in response to the plurality of second pulse signals; a voltage detecting circuit which is connected to the output of the pump circuit to detect the second voltage output from the pump circuit and output an

output voltage corresponding to the second voltage; a
comparator which is supplied with the first pulse
signal output from the first pulse generator, the
output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit, and a
5 reference voltage, the comparator making a comparison
between the output voltage of the voltage detecting
circuit and the reference voltage with each cycle of
the first pulse signal and turning the first switch
circuit off and the second switch circuit on when the
10 output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit is
higher than the reference voltage; and a third pulse
generator which is connected to the output of the
second switch circuit to generate a third pulse signal
and apply it to the first pulse generator in response
15 to the output signal of the first pulse generator
supplied via the second switch circuit.

According to a further aspect of the present
invention, there is provided a DC-DC converter circuit
comprising: a first oscillator which output a first
20 pulse signal; a second oscillator which output a second
pulse signal; a timing generator which is supplied with
the first pulse signal output from the first oscillator
to generate a plurality of timing signals; a pump
circuit which is supplied with the timing signals from
25 the timing generator and a first voltage to boost the
first voltage to a second voltage in response to the
timing signals; a voltage detecting circuit which is

connected to the output of the pump circuit to detect the second voltage output from the pump circuit and output an output voltage corresponding to the second voltage; and a comparator which is supplied with the first and second pulse signals output from the first and second oscillators, the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit, and a reference voltage, the comparator making a comparison between the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit and the reference voltage with each cycle of one of the first and second pulse signals and turning the first oscillator off and the second oscillator on when the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit is higher than the reference voltage.

According to a still further aspect of the present invention, there is provided a DC-DC converter circuit comprising: a first pulse generator which generates a first pulse signal; a second pulse generator which is connected to the first pulse generator to generate a second pulse signal in response to the first pulse signal; a third pulse generator which generates a third pulse signal; a pump circuit which is supplied with the second pulse signal output from the second pulse generator and a first voltage and boosts the first voltage to a second voltage in response to the second pulse signal; a voltage detecting circuit which is connected to the output of the pump circuit to detect

the second voltage output from the pump circuit and
output an output voltage corresponding to the second
voltage; and a comparator which is supplied with the
first and third pulse signals output from the first and
5 third pulse generators, the output voltage of the
voltage detecting circuit, and a reference voltage, the
comparator making a comparison between the output
voltage of the voltage detecting circuit and the
reference voltage with each cycle of one of the first
10 and third pulse signals and turning the first pulse
generator off and the second pulse generator on when
the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit is
higher than the reference voltage.

According to yet another aspect of the present
15 invention, there is provided a DC-DC converter circuit
comprising: an oscillator which produces a signal; a
transistor connected between a first power supply and
an output terminal; a drive circuit which is
responsive to the output signal of the oscillator to
20 drive the transistor; a voltage detecting circuit which
is connected to the output terminal to detect the
voltage output from the output terminal and output an
output voltage corresponding to the voltage at the
output terminal; and a comparator which is supplied
25 with the output signal of the oscillator, the output
voltage of the voltage detecting circuit, and a
reference voltage, the comparator making a comparison

between the output voltage of the voltage detecting circuit and the reference voltage with each cycle of the output signal of the oscillator and controlling the operation of the drive circuit.

5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a schematic and block diagram representation of a DC-DC converter according to a first embodiment of the present invention which is used as a boosting circuit;

10 FIG. 2 shows an exemplary arrangement of the comparator in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 shows an exemplary arrangement of the oscillator in FIG. 1;

15 FIG. 4 is a block diagram of the timing generator in FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 shows an exemplary arrangement of the pulse generator in FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the pulse generator in FIG. 5;

20 FIG. 7 shows an exemplary arrangement of the timing generator in FIG. 4;

FIG. 8 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the timing generator in FIG. 7;

25 FIG. 9 shows an exemplary arrangement of the buffer circuit in FIG. 1;

FIG. 10 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the buffer circuit in FIG. 9;

FIG. 11 shows an exemplary arrangement of the pump circuit in FIG. 1;

FIG. 12 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the DC-DC converter in FIG. 1;

5 FIG. 13 is a schematic and block diagram representation of a DC-DC converter according to a second embodiment of the present invention which is used as a boosting circuit;

10 FIG. 14 shows an exemplary arrangement of the pulse generators 22, 24 and 25 in FIG. 13;

FIG. 15 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the pulse generators in FIG. 14;

FIG. 16 shows an exemplary arrangement of the pulse generator 27 in FIG. 13;

15 FIG. 17 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the pulse generator in FIG. 16;

FIG. 18 shows an exemplary arrangement of the delay circuit 22d in FIG. 14;

20 FIG. 19 shows an exemplary arrangement of the delay circuits 22c and 27c in FIGS. 14 and 16;

FIG. 20 shows an exemplary arrangement of the delay circuit 27d in FIG. 16;

25 FIG. 21 is a schematic and block diagram representation of a boosting circuit according to a third embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 22 is a schematic and block diagram representation of a boosting circuit according to a

fourth embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 23 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the circuit in FIG. 22;

FIG. 24 shows a modification of the pulse
5 generators in FIG. 22;

FIG. 25 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the pulse generator in FIG. 24;

FIG. 26 is a schematic and block diagram representation of a DC-DC converter according to a
10 fifth embodiment of the present invention which is used as a bucking circuit;

FIG. 27 shows an exemplary arrangement of the drive circuit in FIG. 26; and

FIG. 28 shows a prior art boosting circuit.

15 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Hereinafter, the preferred embodiments of the present invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[First Embodiment]

20 FIG. 1 shows a DC-DC converter according to a first embodiment which is used as a boosting circuit.

This boosting circuit, indicated at 10, comprises an oscillator (OSC) 11, a NAND gate 12, a timing generator (TG1) 13, a buffer circuit (BUF) 14, a pump
25 circuit (PMP) 15, a voltage detecting circuit 16 consisting of resistors R1 and R2, and a synchronous comparator (CMP) 17.

The oscillator 11 is enabled by a signal OST. The oscillator 11 continues oscillation while the signal OST is at a high level. The period of a pulse signal output from the oscillator 11 is variably controlled
5 based on the magnitude of a signal TMCT, which will be described later. The oscillator 11 outputs signals S1 and Von. The signal Von is applied to the comparator 17. The signal S1 is applied to the NAND gate 12 together with an output signal Vpon_p of the comparator
10 17. The NAND gate 12 is responsive to the signal Vpon_p to control whether to allow the output signal S1 of the oscillator 11 to pass through or not. An output signal S1 of the NAND gate 12 is applied through the timing generator (TG1) 13 and the buffer circuit (BUF)
15 14 to the pump circuit 15. An output voltage VPP of the pump circuit 15 is detected by the voltage detecting circuit 16 consisting of the resistors R1 and R2. An output voltage Vppmoni of the voltage detecting circuit 16 is applied to the comparator 17, which
20 compares the input voltage with a reference voltage Vref to output the signal Vpon_p. The operation of the comparator 17 is synchronized with the signal Von. That is, the comparator 17 is responsive to the signal Von to perform a compare operation each time the pulse
25 signal S1 is output from the oscillator 11.

FIG. 2 shows an exemplary arrangement of the comparator 17, which is composed of P channel MOS

transistors P1 through P4, N channel MOS transistors N1 through N5, and a flip-flop circuit 17a. The reference voltage Vref is applied to the gate of the transistor N1. The output voltage Vppmoni of the voltage
5 detecting circuit 16 is applied to the gate of the transistor N2. The output signal Von of the oscillator 11 is applied to the gates of the transistors P1, P4 and N5. The node at which the transistors P3, P4 and N2 are connected is connected to the set input of the
10 flip-flop circuit 17a. The node at which the transistors P1, P2 and N1 are connected is connected to the reset input of the flip-flop circuit 17a. The flip-flop circuit 17a outputs signals Vpon_p and Vpon_n. Of the output signals Vpon_p and Vpon_n of the
15 flip-flop circuit 17a, the signal Vpon_p is applied to the NAND gate 12.

The comparator 17 thus arranged is activated to perform a compare operation when the signal Von goes high. When, at this point, the output voltage Vppmoni
20 of the voltage detecting circuit 16 is lower than the reference voltage Vref, the transistors N1 and P3 are rendered conductive, causing the output signals Vpon_p and Vpon_n of the flip-flop circuit 17a to go high and low, respectively. On the other hand, when the output
25 voltage Vppmoni of the voltage detecting circuit 16 is higher than the reference voltage Vref, the transistors N2 and P2 are rendered conductive, causing the output

signals Vpon_p and Vpon_n of the flip-flop circuit 17a to go low and high, respectively. The comparator 17 is synchronized with the output signal Von of the comparator 17. For this reason, the output signals Vpon_p and Vpon_n of the comparator 17 can be established within one cycle of a pumping operation.

FIG. 3 shows an exemplary arrangement of the oscillator 11. This oscillator, which is a so-called ring oscillator, comprises a NAND gate 11a, a plurality of series-connected inverters 11b through 11e, series combinations each of an N channel MOS transistor 11f and a capacitor 11g each of which is connected between the output of a respective one of the series-connected inverters and ground, a series combination of inverters 11h and 11i connected to the output of the inverter 11b, and a series combination of inverters 11j and 11k connected to the output of the inverter 11e.

The signal OST is applied to an input of the NAND gate 11a. The signal TMCT is applied to the gates of the transistors 11f. The period of the pulse signal output from the oscillator 11 is varied by controlling the resistance of each of the transistors 11f with the signal TMCT. For this reason, the current dissipation in the boosting circuit can be varied between the time when a circuit that is connected to the output of the pump circuit is activated and the time when it is deactivated. For example, when the chip is on standby,

output charges of the pump circuit are not consumed.
For this reason, the period of the pulse signal output
from the oscillator 11 is made longer to reduce the
current dissipation. Conversely, when the chip is in
5 operation, the period of the pulse signal output from
the oscillator 11 is made shorter, causing the pump
circuit to operate faster and the output current to
increase.

The oscillation period of the oscillator 11 can be
10 changed not only by changing the resistance of each of
the transistors 11f but also by changing the
capacitance of each of the capacitors 11g.

FIG. 4 shows an exemplary arrangement of the
timing generator 13. This timing generator is composed
15 of an edge-triggered pulse generator (PG) 13a and a
timing generator (TG2) 13b and outputs signals A and B.

FIG. 5 shows an exemplary arrangement of the pulse
generator 13a. This pulse generator, which is a one-
shot (monostable) multivibrator, comprises cross-
20 coupled NAND gates 13a-1 and 13a-2 forming a flip-flop
circuit, a delay circuit 13a-3, and inverters 13a-4 and
13a-5. The pulse generator 13a responds to the output
signal S2 of the NAND gate 12 to produce a pulse signal
S3 which corresponds in width to the delay time DL1
25 introduced by the delay circuit 13a-3 as shown in
FIG. 6. The pulse width of the signal S3 is set
shorter than half the period of the output signal S2 of

the NAND gate 12.

FIG. 7 shows an exemplary arrangement of the timing generator (TG2) 13b. This timing generator is constructed from a NAND gate 13b-1, a delay circuit 13b-2, an inverter 13b-3, and a NOR gate 13b-4. The timing generator 13b responds to the output signal S3 of the pulse generator 13a to output complementary signals A and B as shown in FIG. 8.

FIG. 9 shows an exemplary arrangement of the buffer circuit 14. This buffer circuit is composed of inverters 14a through 14e which are connected as shown. As shown in FIG. 10, the buffer circuit 14 responds to the signals A and B output from the timing generator 13 to output signals C, D and E.

FIG. 11 shows an exemplary arrangement of the pump circuit 15. This pump circuit is composed of series-connected N channel MOS transistors 15a and 15b and capacitors 15c, 15d and 15e. The pump circuit 15 responds to the signals C, D and E output from the buffer circuit 14 to boost the power supply voltage Vdd to a voltage Vpp.

FIG. 12 shows the overall operation of the boosting circuit shown in FIG. 1. When the signal OST is raised to a high level, the oscillator 11 is enabled to output the pulse signal S1. In the initial state, the output voltage Vpp of the pump circuit 15 is at a low level; thus, the output voltage Vppmoni of the

voltage detecting circuit 16 is at a low level. The output signal V_{pon_p} of the comparator 17 is therefore at a high level, enabling the NAND gate 12 to output the signal S_2 at a high level. In response to this
5 signal S_2 , the timing generator 13, the buffer circuit 14 and the pump circuit 15 operate, allowing the pump circuit to output the boosted voltage V_{pp} .

The comparator 17 responds to the signal V_{on} output from the oscillator 11 to compare the output
10 voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 with the reference voltage V_{ref} with each cycle of the pulse signal S_1 . The signal V_{on} is opposite in phase to the signal S_1 from the oscillator 11. The comparator 17 performs a compare operation before the
15 signal S_1 rises. Therefore, the voltage of the output signal V_{pon_p} of the comparator 17 becomes established on the falling edge of the signal S_1 .

When, in the time interval T_2 shown in FIG. 12, the output voltage V_{pp} of the pump circuit 15 exceeds
20 the target voltage, the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 rises above the reference voltage V_{ref} , thus causing the output signal V_{pon_p} of the comparator 17 to go to a low level. Thus, the output signal S_1 of the NAND gate 12 is fixed at a high
25 level, so that the pumping operation is stopped during the time interval T_2 .

According to the first embodiment, the synchronous

comparator 17 is used to make a comparison between the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 adapted to detect the output voltage of the pump circuit 15 and the reference voltage V_{ref} with each
5 cycle of the output signal $S1$ of the oscillator 11, and the operation of the pump circuit 15 is controlled by the comparator output. For this reason, the operation of the pump circuit 15 can be controlled in one cycle of the output signal $S1$ of the oscillator 11, allowing
10 variations in the output voltage V_{pp} of the pump circuit to be suppressed. Thus, the ripple component can be suppressed, allowing the capacitance of the decoupling capacitor to be reduced and an increase in the chip size to be avoided.

15 Moreover, the use of the synchronous comparator 17 that operates in synchronization with the signal V_{on} from the oscillator 11 allows the operation of the pump circuit 15 to be controlled within one cycle of the oscillator output signal $S1$. Furthermore, the edge-triggered timing generator 13 and the edge-triggered
20 delay circuits are used to control the starting and stopping of the pumping operation. For this reason, even if the oscillator 11 ceases its operation, the pump circuit 15 will not cease its operation before one
25 pumping operation is completed. Thus, the charging of the capacitors that form the pump circuit 15 will not be stopped prematurely, allowing remaining charges in

the capacitors to be suppressed and the generation of noise to be prevented.

[Second Embodiment]

FIG. 13 shows a boosting circuit according to a second embodiment of the present invention. In this figure, parts corresponding to those in FIG. 1 are denoted by like reference numerals.

A boosting circuit 15 of the second embodiment has a first signal path 20a and a second signal path 20b. The first signal path 20a includes an OR gate 23 acting as a switch circuit, and pulse generators 24 and 25. The second signal path 20b includes the comparator 17, an OR gate 26 acting as a switch circuit, and a pulse generator 27. The first and second signal paths share an OR gate 21 and a pulse generator 22. Unlike the first embodiment that includes the oscillator 11, in the second embodiment, the pulse generators 25 and 27 form oscillators.

In the first signal path 20a, the signal OST is applied to the OR gate 21 with the polarity inverted. The output signal B of the pulse generator 25 and the output signal of the pulse generator 27 are also applied to the OR gate 21 the output signal of which is applied to the pulse generator 22. The output signal of the pulse generator 22 is applied through the OR gate 23 to the pulse generator 24 together with the output signal Vpon_n of the comparator 17. The output

signal B of the pulse generator 25 is applied to the buffer circuit 14 together with the output signal A of the pulse generator 24.

5 In the second signal path 20b, the signal Von output from the pulse generator 22 is applied to the comparator 17 the output signal Vpon_p of which is applied to the OR gate 26 together with the output signal of the pulse generator 22. The output signal of the OR gate 26 is applied to the pulse generator 27 to
10 which the signal TMCT is applied. The period of the pulse signal output from the pulse generator 27 is controlled by the signal TMCT.

FIG. 14 shows an exemplary arrangement of the pulse generators 22, 24 and 25. Each of these pulse
15 generators is constructed from cross-coupled NAND gates 22a and 22b forming a flip-flop circuit, a delay circuit 22c having a delay time of DL2, a delay circuit 22d having a delay time of DL1, and inverters 22e and 22f.

20 FIG. 15 illustrates the operation of the pulse generators 22, 24 and 25. These pulse generators, which are each a one-shot multivibrator, operate in such a way that, as shown in FIG. 15, when an input signal IN goes to a low level, an output signal OUT
25 having a pulse width corresponding to the delay time DL1 is output after a lapse of time DL2.

FIG. 16 shows an exemplary arrangement of the

pulse generator 27. This pulse generator is constructed from cross-coupled NAND gates 27a and 27b forming a flip-flop circuit, a delay circuit 27c having a delay time of DL2, a delay circuit 27d having a delay time of DL3 ($> DL1$), and inverters 27e and 27f.

FIG. 17 illustrates the operation of the pulse generator 27. This pulse generator, which is a one-shot multivibrator, operates in such a way that, as shown in FIG. 17, when an input signal IN goes to a low level, an output signal OUT having a pulse width corresponding to the delay time DL3 is output after a lapse of time DL2. The pulse width corresponding to DL3 is set longer than the pulse width corresponding to DL1 shown in FIG. 15.

In the pulse generators 22, 24, 25 and 27, setting of the delay time DL2 allows for prevention of the signals C, D and E from overlapping one another in time in the pumping operation of the pump circuit 15.

FIG. 18 shows an exemplary arrangement of the delay circuit 22d. This delay circuit is composed of a P channel MOS transistor 22d-1 and an N channel MOS transistor 22d-2 which are connected to form an inverter, a resistor R11 connected between the N channel MOS transistor 22d-2 and ground, an inverter 22d-3 connected between the node at which the transistors 22d-1 and 22d-2 are connected together and the output terminal, and a capacitor C connected

between the input of the inverter 22d-3 and ground.

FIG. 19 shows an exemplary arrangement of the delay circuits 22c and 27c. These delay circuit are each composed of a P channel MOS transistor 22c-1 and an N channel MOS transistor 22c-2 which are connected to form an inverter, a resistor R12 connected between the N channel MOS transistor 22c-2 and ground, an inverter 22c-3 connected between the node at which the transistors 22c-1 and 22c-2 are connected together and the output terminal, and a capacitor C connected between the input of the inverter 22c-3 and ground. The value of the resistor R12 is set lower than that of the resistor R11 in the delay circuit 22d shown in FIG. 18 ($R11 > R12$). Thus, the delay time DL2 set in the delay circuits 22c and 27c is less than the delay time DL2 set in the delay circuit 22d.

FIG. 20 shows an exemplary arrangement of the delay circuit 27d. This delay circuit is composed of a P channel MOS transistor 27d-1 and an N channel MOS transistor 27d-2 which are connected to form an inverter, a series combination of a resistor R11 and an N channel MOS transistor 27d-4 connected between the N channel MOS transistor 27d-2 and ground, a resistor R12 connected in parallel with the resistor R11 and the transistor 27d-4, an inverter 27d-3 connected between the node at which the transistors 27d-1 and 27d-2 are connected together and the output terminal, and a

capacitor C connected between the input of the inverter
27d-3 and ground. The value of the resistor R11 is set
smaller than that of the resistor R12 in the delay
circuit 22d shown in FIG. 18 ($R11 < R12$). The
5 transistor 27d-2 has its gate connected to receive the
signal TMCT.

In the above arrangement, as in the first
embodiment, the output signals Vpon_p and Vpon_n of the
comparator 17 are at high and low levels, respectively,
10 when the output voltage Vpp of the pump circuit 15 is
lower than the target voltage. Thus, the input
condition of the OR gate 23 is met, bringing the first
signal path 20a into operation. The OR gate 23 is
enabled to output the output signal of the pulse
15 generator 22 to the first signal path, so that the
first signal path is brought into operation.

That is, when the signal OST goes high, each of
the pulse generators 22, 24 and 25 operates in sequence
to output pulse signals in succession. The output
20 signals A and B of the respective pulse generators 24
and 25 are applied to the buffer circuit 14 which in
turn outputs the signals C, D and E to drive the pump
circuit 15. In this state, the comparator 17 makes a
comparison between the reference voltage Vref and the
25 output voltage Vppmoni of the voltage detecting circuit
16 with each cycle of the signal Von output from the
pulse generator 22.

When the output voltage V_{pp} of the pump circuit 15 reaches the target voltage, the output signals V_{pon_p} and V_{pon_n} of the comparator 17 go low and high, respectively. Thus, the input condition of the OR gate 23 becomes unsatisfied while the input condition of the OR gate 26 becomes satisfied, the OR gate 23 is disabled while the OR gate 26 is enabled, causing the second signal path 20b to operate. Therefore, since the output signal of the pulse generator 22 is applied through the OR gate 26 to the pulse generator 27, the pulse generators 24 and 25 and the pump circuit 15 are disabled. In this state, the comparator 17 makes a comparison between the reference voltage V_{ref} and the output voltage V_{ppmoni} with each cycle of the signal V_{on} output from the pulse generator 22. As a result, when the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 falls below the reference voltage V_{ref} , the pulse generators 24 and 25 and the pump circuit 15 are enabled again.

According to the second embodiment, the pump circuit 15 is controlled by applying the output signal of the pulse generator 22 to a separate circuit in enabling or disabling the pump circuit and moreover the two pulse generators 24 and 25 act as substitutes for an oscillator. For this reason, the oscillator 11 can be omitted to make the arrangement simple and the design easy.

The pulse generators 24 and 25 that use edge-triggered delay circuits are used as an oscillator to control the pump circuit. For this reason, the pump circuit will be disabled at the completion of one cycle of pumping operation. Thus, the ripple can be made smaller, allowing the capacitance of the decoupling capacitor to be reduced.

The pump circuit is not enabled or disabled in the middle of the pumping operation. For this reason, the pump circuit will be enabled all the time from a stable state and disabled in the stable state, allowing the generation of noise to be suppressed.

The pulse generator 27 that is operated when the pump circuit 15 is disabled is designed so that its output pulse width can be adjusted by the signal TMCT. Thus, the current dissipation when the pump circuit is disabled can be reduced by increasing the output pulse width of the pulse generator 27.

[Third Embodiment]

FIG. 21 shows a boosting circuit according to a third embodiment of the present invention. In this figure, parts corresponding to those in FIG. 1 are denoted by like reference numerals.

Unlike the first embodiment, the third embodiment is provided with two oscillators 31 and 32 and OR gates 33, 34 and 35.

The signal OST is applied to an input of the OR

gate 33 with its polarity inverted. The OR gate 33 has its other inputs connected to receive output signals of the oscillators 31 and 32 and the output signal V_{pon_n} of the comparator 17. The OR gate 34 has its inputs
5 connected to receive the output signals of the oscillators 31 and 32 and the output signal V_{pon_p} of the comparator 17. The output signal of the OR gate 34 is applied to the oscillator 32. The oscillation period of the oscillator 32 is controlled by the signal
10 TMCT. The output signal of the oscillator 32 is applied to an input of the OR gate 35. The output signal of the oscillator 31 is applied to the timing generator 13 and to the other input of the OR gate 35 the output signal of which is applied to the comparator
15 17 as the signal V_{on} . The comparator 17 makes a comparison between the reference voltage V_{ref} and the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 to output the signals V_{pon_p} and V_{pon_n} .

The operation of the third embodiment is
20 substantially the same as that of the second embodiment. The signal path varies between the operating and stopped states of the pump circuit 15. That is, when the pump circuit 15 operates, the oscillator 31 operates. When the pump circuit 15 is
25 placed in the stopped state, on the other hand, the oscillator 31 is shut down, while the oscillator 32 operates.

When the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 is lower than the reference voltage V_{ref} , the output signals V_{pon_p} and V_{pon_n} of the comparator 17 are at high and low levels, respectively. In this state, when the signal OST goes high, the oscillator 31 initiates operation. The output signal of the oscillator 31 is applied through the timing generator 13 and the buffer circuit 14 to the pump circuit 15. Thus, the pump circuit 15 is enabled to initiate a boosting operation. The output signal of the oscillator 31 is also applied through the OR gate 35 to the comparator 17 as the signal V_{on} . The comparator 17 thus makes a comparison between the reference voltage V_{ref} and the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 with each cycle of the signal output from the oscillator 31.

When the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 increases above the reference voltage V_{ref} , the output signals V_{pon_p} and V_{pon_n} of the comparator 17 go low and high, respectively. As a result, the oscillator 31 is shut down, while the oscillator 32 is rendered operative. In this state, the comparator 17 responds to the signal applied thereto from the oscillator 32 through the OR gate 35 to perform a compare operation. When the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 falls below the reference voltage V_{ref} , the pumping

operation is resumed as described previously.

The third embodiment will also provide the same advantages as the first and second embodiments.

The period of the output signal of the oscillator
5 32 is made variable according to the level of the
signal TMCT. For this reason, the current dissipation
can be varied between the time when the circuit coupled
to the output of the pump circuit 15 is in the
operating state and the time when it is in the stopped
10 state. Thus, when the chip is on standby, the period
of oscillation of the oscillator 32 can be made longer
to reduce the current dissipation.

[Fourth Embodiment]

FIG. 22 shows a boosting circuit according to a
15 fourth embodiment of the present invention. In this
figure, parts corresponding to those in the third
embodiment are denoted by like reference numerals.

In the fourth embodiment, unlike the third
embodiment, two pulse generators are used to control
20 the buffer circuit 14 without using the oscillators 31
and 32 and the timing generator 13. The fourth
embodiment includes pulse generators 41 to 44 each
comprised of a one-shot multivibrator and OR gates 45
to 48. The OR gate 45 has its inputs connected to
25 receive output signals of the pulse generators 42 and
44 and the output signal V_{pon_n} of the comparator 17,
and its output connected to the pulse generator 41 the

output of which is connected to an input of the OR gate
46. The OR gate 46 has its other input connected to
receive the inverse of the signal OST. The output
signal of the OR gate 46 is applied to the pulse
5 generator 42. The output signal A of the pulse
generator 41 and the output signal B of the pulse
generator 42 are applied to the buffer circuit 14.

The OR gate 47 has its inputs connected to receive
output signals of the pulse generators 42 and 44 and
10 the output signal Vpon_p of the comparator 17 and its
output connected to the pulse generator 43 the output
of which is connected to the input of the pulse
generator 44 supplied with the signal TMCT. The output
signals of the respective pulse generators 41 and 43
15 are applied through the OR gate 48 to the comparator 17
as the signal Von.

FIG. 23 illustrates the operation of the fourth
embodiment. The operation of the fourth embodiment is
substantially the same as that of the third embodiment.
20 The signal path varies between the operating and
stopped states of the pump circuit 15. That is, when
the pump circuit 15 operates, the pulse generators 41
and 42 operate. When the pump circuit 15 is placed in
the stopped state, on the other hand, the pulse
25 generators 41 and 42 are shut down, while the pulse
generators 43 and 44 are operated.

When the output voltage Vppmoni of the voltage

detecting circuit 16 is lower than the reference voltage V_{ref} , the output signals V_{pon_p} and V_{pon_n} of the comparator 17 are at high and low levels, respectively. In this state, when the signal OST goes high, the pulse generators 41 and 42 initiate operation. The output signals A and B of the respective pulse generators 41 and 42 are applied through the buffer circuit 14 to the pump circuit 15. Thus, the pump circuit 15 is enabled to initiate a boosting operation. The output signal of the pulse generator 41 is also applied through the OR gate 48 to the comparator 17 as the signal V_{on} . The comparator 17 thus makes a comparison between the reference voltage V_{ref} and the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 with each cycle of the signal output from the pulse generator 41.

When the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 increases above the reference voltage V_{ref} , the output signals V_{pon_p} and V_{pon_n} of the comparator 17 go low and high, respectively. As a result, the pulse generators 41 and 42 are shut down, while the pulse generators 43 and 44 are rendered operative. In this state, the comparator 17 responds to the signal applied thereto from the pulse generator 43 through the OR gate 48 to perform a compare operation. When the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 falls below the reference

voltage V_{ref} , the pumping operation is resumed as described previously.

The fourth embodiment will also provide the same advantages as the first, second and third embodiments.

5 The pulse generators 41 and 42 can be modified as shown in FIG. 24. In the circuit shown in FIG. 22, the signal OST is applied to the OR gate 46 connected between the pulse generators 41 and 42. In contrast, in the circuit shown in FIG. 24, the signal OST is
10 applied to a pulse generator 51 followed by a pulse generator 52 through an OR gate 53. Furthermore, the control signal TMCT is applied to both the pulse generators 51 and 52. The signal A is applied to the comparator 17 as the signal Von.

15 FIG. 25 is a waveform diagram illustrating the operation of the circuit shown in FIG. 24. The fourth embodiment can also be implemented by such a circuit as shown in FIG. 24.

[Fifth Embodiment]

20 FIG. 26 shows an application of a DC-DC converter to a bucking circuit 60 according to a fifth embodiment of the present invention. In this figure, parts corresponding to those in the first to fourth embodiments are denoted by like reference numerals.

25 In FIG. 26, the oscillator 11 is adapted to oscillate in response to the signal OST. The output signal S1 of the oscillator 11 is applied through a

drive circuit (DRV) 61 to the gate of a P channel MOS transistor 62, which has its current path connected at one end to an external power supply (VEXT), for example, power supply voltage VDD and at the other end to an end of the resistor R1. An output voltage lower than the applied voltage is output as an internal power supply (VINT) at the node (output node) at which the transistor 62 and the resistor R1 are connected. The comparator 17 makes a comparison between the output voltage Vppmoni of the voltage detecting circuit 16 and the reference voltage Vref in response to the output signal Von of the oscillator 11. The output signal Vpon_p of the comparator 17 is applied to the drive circuit 61.

FIG. 27 shows an exemplary arrangement of the drive circuit 61. To drive the P channel MOS transistor 62 which is large in size, the drive circuit 61 is constructed from a plurality of inverters 61a through 61e, a NAND gate 61h, and an inverter 61i. The NAND gate 61h has its inputs connected to receive the output signal S1 of the oscillator 11 and the output signal Vpon_p of the comparator 17 and its output connected through the inverter 61i to the inverter 61a. The P channel MOS transistors and the N channel MOS transistors that constitute the inverters 61a through 61e are formed so that their channel widths increase sequentially. That is, the channel widths of the P and

N channel MOS transistors in the inverter 61a are set the narrowest, while the channel widths of the P and N channel MOS transistors in the inverter 61e are set the widest.

5 In the above arrangement, when the signal OST goes to a high level, the oscillator 11 initiates oscillation. When the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 is higher than the reference voltage V_{ref} , the output signal V_{pon_p}
10 of the comparator 17 is at a low level. Thus, the output signal S1 of the oscillator 11 is applied to the drive circuit 61, allowing each of the inverters 61a through 61e in the drive circuit to output a high voltage in sequence. The output voltage of the
15 inverter 61e is applied to the gate of the P channel MOS transistor 62. The transistor 62 is therefore turned on, outputting an internal voltage V_{INT} which is lower than the power supply voltage V_{DD} by the threshold voltage.

20 The comparator 17 makes a comparison between the reference voltage V_{ref} and the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit 16 with each cycle of the signal V_{on} output from the oscillator 11. When the output voltage V_{ppmoni} of the voltage detecting circuit
25 16 increases above the reference voltage V_{ref} , the output signal V_{pon_p} of the comparator 17 goes high. Thereby, the NAND gate 61h is disabled from

transferring the output signal S1 of the oscillator 11 to the inverters 61a through 61e and 61i. That is, the drive circuit 16 is disabled from driving the transistor 62.

5 According to the fifth embodiment, the comparator 17 makes a comparison between the reference voltage Vref and the output voltage Vppmoni of the voltage detecting circuit 16 with each cycle of the signal Von output from the oscillator 11 in response to the output
10 signal Von of the oscillator 11 and controls the operation of the drive circuit 61 according to the result of comparison. Therefore, the internal voltage VINT output at the output node is controlled with each cycle of the output signal of the oscillator 11,
15 allowing an internal voltage lower than the supply voltage with little ripple to be generated.

 Moreover, since the internal voltage contains little ripple, the capacitance of the decoupling capacitor can be reduced. Thus, the chip size can be
20 prevented from increasing.

 Additional advantages and modifications will readily occur to those skilled in the art. Therefore,, the invention in its broader aspects is not limited to the specific details and representative embodiments
25 shown and described herein. Accordingly, various modifications may be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the general inventive concept

as defined by the appended claims and their equivalents.